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House of Representatives

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE
APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2003

(Continued)

AMENDMENT OFFERED BY MR. SPRATT

Mr. SPRATT. Mr. Chairman, I offer an amendment.

The Clerk read as follows:

Amendment offered by Mr. SPRATT:

Page 34, line 2, after the dollar amount, insert "(reduced by \$30,000,000)(increased by \$30,000,000)".

Mr. SPRATT. Mr. Chairman, this amendment would take \$30 million out of the space-based kinetic intercept program, leaving \$14 or \$15 million for concept definition, which is the status of it anyway, and instead, shift that \$30 million to another program, a vitally important program as part of missile defense which has been debited by this bill, the airborne laser bill.

So it would not decrease by any means the total amount appropriated by this bill for ballistic missile defense. It would simply reallocate within those accounts \$30 million, shifting it, as I said, from the space-based boost phase interceptor over to the airborne laser system to make up for 50 percent of a cut which the committee has made in that particular program.

Mr. Chairman, some 15 years ago when the SDI program, Strategic Defense Initiative, was first begun, it was to be a layered defense. There were to be ground-based layers and space-based layers.

One of the space-based layers was a space-based intercept system. It would have been a satellite which would have housed many different smaller satellites, each of which would have housed many different interceptors, each of which could be fired at missiles as they were launched, or even in the midcourse, as they came towards the United States.

The problem with this system, in addition to the fact of being an enormous system, was that in a fixed orbit in

space a target this large with that many interceptors on it was a very valuable target and a very vulnerable target; and any country able to fire at us an ICBM that really put us at risk would also be able to build what is called a DANASAT, a direct ascent ASAT, to take out that defensive system.

So to avoid the inherent vulnerability of having predeployed satellites in space, the idea of Brilliant Pebbles was conceived. This system, the SBI system, was abandoned and Brilliant Pebbles was taken up.

The idea of Brilliant Pebbles was to make this target not so valuable and not so vulnerable by making each satellite a single interceptor. Each would have been self-sufficient and able to sense what was coming on and able to propel itself towards that oncoming missile and take it out.

Members can imagine how daunting this technology is. Because the technology was so daunting and the cost of lift and other things was so enormously expensive, the Brilliant Pebbles program was abandoned, as well.

We have spent substantial sums of money, therefore, on space-based interceptors and boost phase interceptors in space. We have abandoned both. We should learn from our mistakes. We should learn from our mistakes and concentrate on what has worked and put our assets where they are likely to pay off in the near term. That is exactly what we are trying to do today.

I am not opposed to boost-phase intercept. In fact, what I am trying to do is shift some money from a system not likely to work any time soon into a system that shows the promise of being an effective space-based or boost-phase interceptor, the ABL, the airborne laser.

Why do I do this? One reason for doing it is that if we look at what the Missile Defense Agency, the BMD agency is doing today, we will see they have

a full plate, a fuller plate than they have had since SDI began. They are developing a ground-based midcourse interceptor; they are developing two or three variations on a ship-based midcourse interceptor and a ship-based boost-phase interceptor; they are developing theater systems like the PAC-3, the THAAD, the MEADs. They are developing laser systems, airborne laser systems, and space-based laser systems.

They need to winnow down some of these systems and focus on what works and try to bring those things that are most feasible to fruition, as opposed to going off in pursuit of a million different ideas. So that is what we would try to do here, refine the focus of the program on a system that is likely to work, taking out of a system that has been proven not to work in at least two iterations over the last 15 years.

Let me say that this system right now, this so-called space-based boost-phase intercept system, is relatively, relative to the defense budget, a small system. It is \$23 million, or \$23.8 million is the funding level for this year. The President requested \$54.4 million. We would leave in the budget \$14 million for this program; but as I said, we would shift the program.

Now, it does not seem like it is really crowding anything out at that level of funding. What we have to do is look at what the MDA, the Missile Defense Agency, has provided us in a backup and justification charts for the cost growth they expect in this particular program, the boost-phase intercept program. They expect the cost to go up to \$510 million.

The CHAIRMAN. The time of the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. SPRATT) has expired.

(By unanimous consent, Mr. SPRATT was allowed to proceed for 2 additional minutes.)

Mr. SPRATT. Mr. Chairman, this program will go from today's modest

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